

# Billingham South Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111524
<b>Local Authority</b>	Stockton-on-Tees
<b>Inspection number</b>	310618
<b>Inspection dates</b>	16–17 January 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Inkster HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	351
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Reverend Richard Smith
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Kenneth Robinson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2004
<b>School address</b>	Belasis Avenue Billingham TS23 1BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01642 894003
<b>Fax number</b>	01642 894004

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Billingham South Community Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is slightly higher than average. There are very few pupils from a minority ethnic background or who are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities including those with a statement of special educational need is similar to that found nationally. The school has an infant assessment class and a junior support base for 28 pupils with significant special needs from the local area. These pupils are integrated into mainstream classes for some lessons. The school has achieved a number of awards including the Eco School Bronze Award, the International School Foundation Award, Active Mark 2007, Reading Connects School Award and the Healthy School's Silver Award.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Billingham South Community Primary School is a good school with some significant strengths. In particular, it has a very strong ethos of care and support for all its pupils, including those who are vulnerable or who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Staff know pupils very well and every child is valued. This is particularly the case in the infant assessment class and junior support base where pupils make very good progress in their learning and are fully included in mainstream classes and other activities. One parent echoes the views of the majority when they say, 'the staff at the school are very approachable and the children's needs are very important'. This excellent care and support is evident in pupils' good personal development. Pupils display positive attitudes, very good behaviour and exceptional enjoyment in their learning. However, some pupils do not always know what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning. Pupils say they feel safe and know there is someone they can turn to if they have a problem. They know how to lead healthy lifestyles and take their responsibilities very seriously as members of the school council and when working with younger pupils. Attendance has greatly improved and is now satisfactory.

Teaching and learning are good throughout the school, and are improving still further as a result of rigorous monitoring by senior staff. This is having a positive impact on standards which are rising more rapidly than in the past, and are currently broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, there are a small minority of weaker, although satisfactory, lessons where the pace of learning is slow and pupils do not make as much progress as they should. There has been a legacy of underachievement because of staff changes in the past, but the school is now stable. This is reflected in the way pupils are currently making good progress from their starting points. Children enter the Foundation Stage with skills and abilities which are below those typical of children their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy skills and in their mathematical development. Children in the Foundation Stage are making good progress and most reach or exceed the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. Progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stage 1, and evidence shows that standards have risen over the last three years. The collation of data on the progress of groups of pupils is fragmented. However, an electronic system of tracking pupils' progress is now being introduced and staff know pupils well. The assessment systems in place for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are very good.

The curriculum is good and is carefully planned and structured to ensure there is breadth and balance, and clear progression in learning for pupils. The school has developed very good systems for assessing the progress of pupils in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The curriculum is greatly enriched through a wide range of visits and visitors, and through the provision of many extra curricular activities. These activities motivate pupils well and enhance their learning. However, results in writing are slightly weaker, partly because there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their skills in extended writing across the curriculum.

Leadership and management are good at all levels, and the work of the senior and middle leaders is evident in the good achievement and good personal development and well-being of pupils. Strong teamwork is ensuring a very positive impact on all aspects of the work of the school. Governors are highly supportive and rigorous in holding the school to account. As a result, the school is moving from strength to strength, and has good capacity to improve even further. The school gives good value for money.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

The recently established Foundation Stage unit provides the children with a good start to school life. Children enter the Nursery with skills and abilities which are below those typical of their age, particularly in their early communication, language and literacy skills and their mathematical development. They make good progress as a consequence of the good quality education and care provided. These have increased opportunities for children to work across a range of activities and ensure their individual needs are met. Induction arrangements are very effective, and parents are warmly welcomed into the nursery to support their children. Pupils' personal development is very good and the vast majority demonstrate very good behaviour, exceptionally good manners and care and consideration for one another. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all activities. Teaching and learning are good overall and occasionally outstanding. Children benefit greatly from extensive opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. There is mainly a good balance of whole-class, group and child initiated activities, which ensure that children are appropriately involved in their learning, but occasionally children are requested to sit on the carpet for too long and find it difficult to concentrate. The curriculum is good and has been planned to cater for the needs of all learners. Opportunities for learning outdoors have improved greatly since the last inspection. The strategic leadership of the Foundation Stage is very good; it demonstrates a very clear understanding of the strengths of the provision; and is highly proactive in seeking ways to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' writing skills and increase their opportunities to use extended writing across the curriculum.
- Ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do to improve to reach the next national curriculum level.
- Improve the collation of data for groups of pupils so that managers have a consistent and accurate overview of pupils' standards, and the progress they are making.
- Improve the pace of learning in the small minority of weaker lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Standards are rising quickly in response to the priority given to them by managers at all levels. Consequently, pupils are achieving well. When they enter the nursery their development is below that which is typical for their age because early communication, language, literacy and mathematical skills are below average. From this starting point, pupils make good progress to reach broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make very good progress in all year groups because the dedicated help that they receive in class and beyond is of consistently good quality.

In the national tests in English, mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 6, results improved steadily between 2005 and 2007 to reach average standards. In 2007, the challenging governors' targets were partly met, and results represented good achievement. In the current Year 6, reliable assessment data suggest that the upward trend will continue. This is confirmed by observation of pupils in class. Writing remains weaker than reading or mathematics because there are limited opportunities to practise it in extended form across the curriculum. Mental numerical skills are good, but pupils tend to show insufficient working when setting problems

out on paper. Over the last three years, teacher assessments in Year 2 have also shown standards rising to broadly average but, as in Year 6, writing is a little weaker than other key skills. The school is streamlining their systems for tracking the progress of groups of pupils as the current system is too fragmented.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are happy and enthusiastic about school and attendance is now in line with the national average. Attendance has improved since the last inspection not only because the school has successfully implemented strategies to follow up absentees but also because the learning ethos of the school has improved considerably with recent refurbishment. Pupils are keen to express their pleasure, 'it's great here'. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural is good. Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities to extend their awareness of life and religion in other cultures. They have good relationships with their peers and adults, and enthusiastically tackle any tasks they are set. An example of this is their work to achieve 'Digital Excellence Awards.' Pupils know what they must do to stay fit and well. Their economic awareness and involvement in the community is well developed because of the close links the school has with local businesses. The school council is proud of its achievements, and in particular the development of a rewards scheme. Behaviour is mainly very good in lessons and around the school and pupils report there are no incidents of bullying. As a result, they feel safe and secure. There are opportunities for the older pupils to look after the younger members of the school as Zone Park supervisors and they do this sensibly and with sensitivity.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

A productive classroom atmosphere prevails throughout the school, and teaching and learning are good overall. This is because relationships are good and teachers usually employ a variety of approaches to interest and fully engage the pupils. They plan lessons well and set out clearly what pupils of all abilities are expected to achieve. Instructions are clear, so pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Teachers enhance the presentation of lessons by using ICT to present text, diagrams and images and through the appropriate use of resources that frequently provide a practical dimension to the work. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are confident that they are doing well. Teachers frequently manage their classes well through an energetic and compelling style. This results in a strong pace for learning. In the weaker, but nevertheless satisfactory, lessons the pace of learning is slower because teachers allow pupils to achieve less in the time available. Marking is regular and helpful in pointing pupils towards areas for improvement.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a broad and relevant curriculum that meets the needs and interests of pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There is a clearly structured overall plan which ensures that a wide range of activities are undertaken and that there is progression in learning for pupils throughout the school. However, there are currently not enough opportunities for pupils to use extended writing across the curriculum. Pupils benefit greatly from 'themed' events, for example, an International Week and a science week.

The school ensures that pupils are introduced to, and develop an understanding of, cultures other than their own, including links with schools in other countries. The curriculum is greatly enriched by an extensive range of well attended extra curricular activities. Pupils say they particularly enjoy opportunities to play sport and meet pupils from other schools in tournaments. A great emphasis is placed on educational visits and visitors to broaden pupils' experiences, including a residential visit for older pupils.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support. The key to the school's success is in the excellent level of care and support it provides for pupils. All members of staff take an interest in pupils as individuals, know the children very well and are able to give sensitive and appropriate support. As a result pupils develop into confident and responsible young people. The school is good at listening and responding to pupils' views and concerns which results in a well integrated community where all are valued. The school's procedures for Child Protection are fully in place and arrangements to keep pupils safe follow current national guidelines. The school is very conscientious in addressing any possible risks at school and particularly when pupils are out on visits.

The assessment of pupils' work has been a major priority for the school over the last year and a half. Great strides have been made so assessments now show clearly where individual pupils are in terms of national curriculum levels. Underachievement is identified quickly and intervention strategies are put into place. However, pupils do not always know what they need to do to reach the next level.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The positive impact of leadership and management is seen clearly in the progress that pupils make in their academic achievements and personal development. The senior management team provides very effective leadership and is responsible for the community's increased confidence in the school over recent years. As one parent indicates, 'the headteacher and deputy headteacher have shown commitment to the staff and children. They have given stability to a school that needed it.' The leadership team is strengthened by a number of highly effective strategic leaders who are committed to supporting and enhancing improvements in the school. The school knows its strengths and the areas to be improved and the strong teamwork is underpinning the drive for excellence. Consequently, the school is well placed to improve even further. Staff are encouraged, through high quality professional development, to use their expertise confidently for the benefit of pupils. Staff morale is high. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted and the school ensures that every child matters. Governors are strong supporters of the school, but are equally confident in acting as a 'critical friend'. They are closely involved in the work of the school and gain first hand knowledge of the quality of teaching and learning by visiting lessons. They fulfil their statutory duties very well. They take their financial responsibilities very seriously, as shown by the extensive improvements to the school buildings. This has encouraged pupils to take great pride in their school and made a clear statement to parents and pupils about the importance of education.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Billingham South Community Primary School, Stockton-on-Tees, TS23 1BE

As you know, Mrs Sewell, Mr Paddick and I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. We enjoyed our time with you and thank you for being so polite, friendly and helpful. Please thank your parents for returning the questionnaires and tell them we took all their views into account. I am writing to let you know what we found out about your school.

We would like you to know that you go to a good school. We were very impressed by the way in which you all get on well with one another and with the excellent care and support given to you by all staff. We were particularly impressed with the way older pupils help younger children in the Zone Park. Your behaviour is very good and you clearly enjoy coming to school very much. Your attendance has greatly improved, so make sure you all continue to come to school every day. Your teachers work very hard and plan lessons very well to ensure everyone makes good progress. Mr Robinson, Mrs Edwards, the governors and all the school leaders are making sure that you all achieve as well as you can and that the school continues to improve even further. They have worked very hard to improve the school buildings and it is clear that you all take great pride in your school.

We have asked Mr Robinson and all the teachers to do a few things which will help to make your school even better. We have asked them to make sure you all know what you have to do to reach the next level in your learning and give you more opportunities to practise your writing in other subjects. We have asked them to make sure all teaching is good or better so you all make as much progress as you can. We have also asked them to make sure they have a better system of checking how much progress you are all making. You can help by continuing to work very hard, particularly to improve your writing.

Thank you so much for helping us with the inspection. You should be very proud of yourselves and of your school. Good luck in the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster HMI